



NEWS RELEASE

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Witnesses for the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office Capture Award at Statewide Event

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – Henry and Joseph Ramirez, both of San Bernardino, received the 2011 Patricia Lewis Witness of the Year Award Tuesday, June 21.

The Award, presented by the California District Attorneys Association, is named after Patricia Lewis, a South-Central Los Angeles woman who testified about a street gang murder in 1982.

Both Henry and Joseph Ramirez received the award based on their testimony last year in the murder trial of their younger brother, 11-year-old Anthony Ramirez.

“The courage exhibited by these two young men was an inspiration to the public as well as the legal and law enforcement community here in San Bernardino,” said Deputy District Attorney Jim McGee, who was the lead prosecutor of the case.

On June 21, 2006, Defendant James Bagsby, then 15, after spending the afternoon drinking and smoking marijuana with his fellow gang members, approached the Ramirez brothers and a group of their friends who were playing basketball at Martin Luther King Middle School in San Bernardino.

Bagsby and a fellow gang member asked, “Where are you from?” and “Do you gang bang?” After the children replied, “We don’t bang,” the two gang members walked away and the boys returned to their game.

Moments later, Bagsby pulled a handgun out from his waistband and fired eleven shots at the group of children on the basketball court. Anthony, who was struck once in the back, died less than an hour later at the hospital.

The trial started on March 15, 2010, and lasted an entire month. While many of the children present that day testified, according to prosecutors, it was the testimony of Henry and Joseph Ramirez that “touched everyone who heard it.”

“Through their pain and courage,” said McGee, “Bagsby was convicted of second degree murder with use of a firearm and ten counts of assault with a firearm and was sentenced to 107 years-to-life in prison.”

In a brief acceptance speech, both boys dedicated their awards to the memory of their murdered brother Anthony Ramirez.

A short video segment of the award ceremony is available on the San Bernardino County District Attorney’s YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/sbcountyda>.

For more information or to retain a copy of a high resolution photo for use, please contact Christopher Lee at (909) 382-3665.

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